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*La Belgique Commerciale sous l'Empereur Charles VI: la Compagnie d'Ostende.* Par MICHEL HUISMAN. (Brussels : Henri Lamertin ; Paris : A. Picard et Fils. 1902. Pp. xii, 556.)

WHEN Carlyle in his *History of Frederick the Great* wrote of what he called the "Shadow-hunts of Kaiser Karl" he included among them the formation of the Ostend Company of Belgian merchants chartered for the purpose of trading with Asia in 1722, and he asserted in his usual slap-dash fashion that this company never existed except on paper, that it never sent a ship to the east, and that it "only produced Diplomacies and 'had the honour to be'" (Book V., Chapter II., "Third Shadow"). Few statements, even from the pen of Carlyle, could have been more inaccurate. Not only did the Ostend Company exist, but it opened a most flourishing trade both with India and China, and caused most sincere apprehensions to the two great maritime nations of the eighteenth century, the Dutch and the English. The opposition of these two nations to the Ostend Company was the keynote of their foreign policy during the first years of peace which followed the conclusion of the Treaties of Utrecht in 1713, and it is from the point of view of international European politics that the Ostend Company has hitherto been regarded. The success of its commercial operations, the nature of its organization, its promise to raise the Belgian merchants once again to the prominent position they had formerly held, have been forgotten, and the publicists and historians who glibly deal with the European history of the eighteenth century write of the Ostend Company, as Carlyle did, with absolute ignorance of its true place in the history of the relations between Asia and Europe.

This review must begin with a tribute to the learned Belgian historians, who during the last few years have shown themselves in the forefront of the modern school of scientific history. There is a tendency to group modern historical writers simply as French and German, and to neglect the admirable work done in history in the smaller countries of Europe, just as there is a tendency to neglect the study of the history of such countries as Belgium and Denmark and Sweden, in spite of their importance in the past, because of their slight political influence at the present time. Yet in these smaller countries the study of history is pursued with even more ardor than elsewhere, because the smaller nationalities realize the contrast between their glorious past and their present insignificance. Nowhere is better historical work being done than in Belgium, both in the careful editing of documents and in the critical appreciation of primary authorities as shown in secondary works. With this sound and careful method goes excellent writing, and the style of modern Belgian histories compares favorably with the products of other European countries. M. Huisman in the volume under review shows a thorough study of the manuscript materials bearing upon his subject preserved not only at Brussels and Antwerp, but also at The Hague, Paris, Berlin, and Vienna. He has carefully studied the mass of pamphlet liter-

ature of his period and from these two sources has produced a work which is not only an original contribution to history of the greatest importance, but is also a prime authority that can never be neglected in the future by students of European or Asiatic history. It is only necessary to compare the brief and unsatisfactory account of the Ostend Company in M. Bonassieux's *Les Grandes Compagnies de Commerce*, up to this time the only real effort to describe it, with the elaborate study of M. Huisman, to perceive how great a service the latter writer has rendered the history of the eighteenth century, and M. Huisman's book adds one more proof of the vitality of the Belgian school of modern historical writers.

The last ten years have witnessed a revival of interest in the old chartered companies by which trade was carried on between Europe and Asia, and this interest is frankly due in England, France, and Germany to the development of the new English chartered companies of the present day. Utterly different in their scope and in their composition as are the new chartered companies, their doings have called attention to the early history of their prototypes. The London East India Company, which made an empire, is now seen to be only one of a series of commercial organizations, though by far the most successful of them, and the causes of the failure of contemporary companies are being analyzed with scientific accuracy. The world policy of the European countries of to-day has aroused an interest in their efforts for African and Asiatic expansion in former centuries. Many French writers have been studying the internal causes which led to the failure of France as against England, and M. Paulliat, in particular, has examined with care the part played by Louis XIV. in the Asiatic ventures of his reign. Herr Ring has dealt with the Asiatic ambitions of Frederick the Great of Prussia, and the reasons which led him to abandon the enterprise. And now M. Huisman has, for the first time, given a true account of the Belgian effort in this direction. For most clearly does it appear that the proper name to be given to the Ostend Company is Belgian and not Austrian. If Sir W. W. Hunter, the most distinguished English writer on the exploitation of Asia by the European nations, were still alive, he would rejoice over M. Huisman's book and would use Belgian in the place of Austrian in dealing with the efforts made by the Ostend Company for a share of the trade of Asia; because, although the Ostend Company received its charter from the Emperor Charles VI., its capital was provided by Belgian merchants, its enterprises were directed by Belgian directors, and its ships were chiefly commanded by Belgian captains. The Austrians had no part nor lot in the Ostend Company, which was, however, sacrificed to aid Austrian policy. It was a cruel fate that cut Belgian aspirations short at the selfish bidding of Dutch and English statesmen, and one of the most interesting features of M. Huisman's book is the evidence that he gives of the vigor and enterprise of Belgian merchants and the way in which all that vigor came to naught owing to the political control of the Catholic Netherlands by the House of Hapsburg and the subordination of Belgian interests to Hapsburg dynastic policy. M.

Huisman describes at length the condition of the Belgian provinces after the Treaties of Utrecht had transferred them from Spain to Austria, and the way in which the war-smitten country at once endeavored under its new rulers to recover some of its old commercial prosperity. The selfish policy of the Dutch worked consistently against any revival of Belgian commerce, and the English merchants and statesmen supported the action of their allies. It was with the greatest difficulty that after years of negotiation the Imperial and Royal Society of the Indies, better known as the Ostend Company, was at last established in 1723. The organization of the company was admirable and contained the results of English, French, and Dutch experience. Its first expeditions were eminently successful. Good management secured for the Belgian ships a share of the China trade upon favorable terms, and an entry into the port of Canton, at that time forbidden to the Dutch. In India the Belgians were less successful, but their settlements at Covelong near Madras and at Banki-Bazar near Calcutta showed considerable promise and might have grown into important factories but for the opposition of the English and the Dutch. The ablest administrator the Belgians sent to India was an Englishman and former servant of the English company named Alexander Hume, and he had laid the foundations of prosperity when European politics ended the life of the Ostend Company. M. Huisman has fully proved the inveterate hostility of the English and Dutch towards their Belgian competitors, and has traced with care the proceedings which led to the suspension of the company in 1727 and its dissolution a few years later. It is a sordid tale of commercial greed making skilful use of political means, and the impression is left that Charles VI. honestly desired the continuance of the company with its renewed prosperity for his Belgian subjects, but was prevented from maintaining their rights by the bitter hostility of the Dutch and the exigencies of his own dynastic policy.

One or two criticisms may be made of M. Huisman's book, not with the idea of faultfinding, but to point out certain difficulties presented to English readers by his neglect to recognize modern terms. For instance, in his spelling of Indian names he has followed the French transliteration which he found in his documents, but which might be puzzling to readers of English books upon the history of India in the eighteenth century. He always spells the name of the Belgian settlement upon the Coromandel coast as Cabelon, whereas the recognized English spelling is Covelong, a name well known to students of Clive's campaigns. Still more misleading is his use of the words Moors and Moorish. In the eighteenth century it was usual for all Europeans, French as well as English, to speak of the Mohammedans of India as "Moors," and to distinguish them from the Gentoos, as they termed the Hindus. This practice was entirely abandoned in the nineteenth century, and now is only found in the writings of French and Belgian historians. It would be well if M. Huisman in the next edition of his book would alter this unscientific terminology, which he has borrowed from the language of his authorities.

Such blemishes are, however, trifling, and this notice must close with an expression of sincere gratitude to M. Huisman for having cleared up one of the dark places in the history of the relations between Europe and Asia, and with a recognition of the fact that he has put forth a work showing wide research, sound criticism, and admirable grasp of the conditions that existed in the early part of the eighteenth century both in Europe and in Asia.

H. MORSE STEPHENS.

*A History of Slavery in Virginia.* By JAMES CURTIS BALLAGH. [Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science. Extra Volume 24.] (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press. 1902. Pp. viii, 160.)

MR. BALLAGH has written the best local study of American slavery which has yet appeared, and one worthy to rank with the admirable work of Jeffrey Brackett. This study of slavery in Virginia is chiefly noteworthy for the careful comparison of slavery in America with serfdom in Europe, or more especially in England, and for its tracing out step by step the legal development of the slave status.

The volume is short and divided into three chapters: a brief historical chapter dealing with the slave-trade; a long chapter of ninety pages, which is the kernel of the dissertation and treats of the rise and development of slavery as a legal and social system; a final chapter dealing with manumission and efforts at emancipation.

The author has evidently strong Southern sympathies; he is fond of proving Massachusetts equally blood-guilty with Virginia, and has discovered a certain quality inherent in white blood which he designates as "sanctity" (p. 61). Nevertheless such things crop out only incidentally, and, on the whole, the temper and balance of the true scholar are well maintained. There are places where one may easily differ with the author's judgment; he contends, for instance, in the initial chapter, that "no colony made a more strenuous and prolonged effort to prevent the imposition of negro slavery upon it, and no state a more earnest attempt to alleviate or rid itself of that burden, than Virginia" (p. 14). True it is that by 1772 there was strong opposition to the slave-trade in the colony, and that such opposition appeared at various times earlier. Nevertheless a review of Virginia legislation on the subject and a knowledge of the large revenue derived from the duty acts on negroes may well lead the student to wonder if moral opposition to the traffic was not at a low ebb during the early part of the eighteenth century, and if the charge that England forced slavery on Virginia is not a little far-fetched. That Virginia early came to fear too many slaves is true, but Mr. Ballagh is assuredly wrong in claiming for this state the honor of being the "first political community in the civilized modern world" to prohibit the importation of slaves (p. 23), since both Connecticut and Rhode Island anticipated her by four years.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Acts and Laws of Conn.* (1784), pp. 233-234; *R. I. Colonial Records*, VII, pp. 251-253.